

whether Time has robbed my arm of its strength."

In half an hour all was bustle and activity in the old blacksmith shop. The wondering neighbors—who had for some months past been obliged to go ten miles to the next village, when anything in that line was required, heard with surprise the busy strokes of the hammer.

Sam Jones almost rejoiced when his horse lost a shoe, because it gave him an opportunity to satisfy his curiosity. He was a rough man, but his heart was touched when he saw the old gentleman hard at work, and it was with almost an air of deference that he asked if his horse could be shod immediately, as he was in haste to go to Clyde on important business.

"Without delay Sam. Here Mr. Rich, will you attend to this?—or, stay, I will do it myself. It is ten years or more, since I have shod a horse; but I know the right way yet, if I mistake not."

The job was about completed, and the old blacksmith, with all the interest and activity of former years was bending over the uplifted foot of the animal, when another person entered the shop. For a moment he stood unnoticed, but an attentive observer of what was passing. The hand of the old gentleman trembled, as he performed the unusual labor, and he paused as if fatigued.

"Father," said a well-known voice at his elbow. "What means this? This work becomes not your gray hairs; give me the hammer."

"I have a vow, William," was the reply, "that your wife and children shall never want while I can raise a hammer; nor your good name be disgraced with debts, if I can earn the means to pay them. God will give me strength."

More affected than he cared to own, William walked to the further part of the shop, and busied himself with some work that stood ready. For many days he had been absent from home, and had returned at a late hour on the previous evening. His feelings had been a good deal softened by the appearance of absolute poverty his cottage had assumed. Something must be done; and after an anxious and restless night, he fell asleep just before the day dawned, with the full resolution to work steadily for three months at least, and then see how things would go.

The bright morning sun streaming in at the window awakened him. He sprang up, and the first sound that fell upon his ear was the busy stroke of the blacksmith's hammer. He listened in surprise; Rich was not wont to go to work without orders. Hastily dressing himself, he left the cottage and sought his shop. Pride, shame, and self-reproach, struggled in his mind, as he watched his aged father steadily pursuing his unwonted task. The latter feelings at length gained the mastery.

"Rest yourself, now, father," he said, as the old gentleman paused from very exhaustion. "Fear neither for my family nor my good name; for, with God's help, both shall be cared for."

"Bless you, my boy, bless you," was the reply. "Your words give me new life. Be yourself again, Billy. The dark cloud is passing away."

At the little cottage nothing was known of what had taken place. With her mind filled with her own sad thoughts, Lizzie noticed not the sounds that showed all were actively engaged at the shop. Her husband did not return at noon—and indeed she scarcely expected him, for he was seldom with them at meals.—She had a lingering hope that he might come in the evening; but even this was very doubtful. Her heart beat quickly, when, just after the sun had sunk behind the Western hills, his step was heard at the door. The little ones clung to her dress as he entered, for they learned to fear his approach.

"Are you not coming to see father?" he said kindly. "You are not afraid of me, Willie, my little man?"

"Not to-night, father," replied Willie, boldly. "Come, sister, come to father; he will not hurt us."

Lizzie trembled lest the reply should irritate him; but he only sighed deeply, and took the child in his arms without speaking. With more cheerfulness than she had felt for months, Lizzie busied herself with preparations for the evening meal.

"Father tells me there is to be a famous lecturer in the village this evening," said William as they took their seats at the table. "Can you go with me to hear him, Lizzie? Never mind the children," he added, as his wife glanced toward the little ones. "Sister Jennie has promised to come round and stay with them."

"Then I will go with pleasure, Will," replied Lizzie, and the untasted food stood before her, for she felt too happy to eat.

"Take some supper, mamma," hissed little Lizzie; and Willie seconded the petition by saying:

"Yes, mamma, take some supper.—Don't make you glad to have father home with us? You always cry when he is gone."

There were tears in Lizzie's eyes, now; but a loving glance from her husband sent a thrill of happiness through her

heart, to which it had long been a stranger.

It seemed almost like a dream to Lizzie when she found herself actually walking through the village of Rose Valley, leaning upon her husband's arm, for it was long since they had been seen together. She was silent, for her heart was too full to speak, and her husband seemed busy with his own thoughts.

She was startled with surprise when she found the subject was temperance; and she wondered, and would have given much to have known if William was aware of this before he invited her to attend. The speaker was an able one.—Most eloquently did he speak of the miseries of intemperance, of the perfect thralldom with which it holds its victim. Admirably did he portray the home of the drunkard. The wretched wife and miserable, neglected children. Then followed an earnest appeal to those he was addressing—to those in particular, who stood on the brink of the fatal precipice, but who had not yet precipitated themselves into the gulf below. "Pause," said he, "pause, and while there is yet time, pledge yourselves, with the help of God, to shake off the yoke that binds you. Be true to yourselves, and to the dear ones that gather around your household hearths."

The pledge was produced, and old and young pressed forward to enroll their names, to be installed as members of the infant lodge of Good Templars.

"Are there not more who should come?" continued the speaker, as the last signature was signed. "Are there not those who are still hesitating between life and death? Remember, that this pledge binds you not to slavery, but it is the token of freedom."

Calmly and deliberately William Jones, the Village Blacksmith, left his wife's side and advanced to the table. There was a general murmur of pleasure throughout the assembly, but Lizzie spoke not, and, to an indifferent spectator, might have appeared unmoved. The name of WILLIAM JONES was plainly written, the assembly dispersed, and each took his way to his own home, or joined the numerous little group who stood conversing upon the topics of the evening.

As Lizzie passed out leaning on the arm of her husband, many a congratulatory smile or kind shake of the hand was received, but apparently they were almost unnoticed. Not one word was spoken until they were passing up the shady walk to the cottage door. The sight of the house, with its bright light within, broke the spell, a full realization of the change which might now take place came over her. The dark cloud had passed away, and her husband, the father of her children was restored to her.

"William! dear, dear William!" she murmured, and burst into tears.

"My own Lizzie! my dear, true-hearted little wife!" he said tenderly, as he encircled her with his arm.

No more passed between them, for Jennie was watching for them; and with many assurances that she had been faithful to her charge, said she must bid them good-night, without delay, for father and mother would be weary with waiting for her.

William and Lizzie stood watching her, as with light steps she passed down the walk, and across the field that led to the "old place," and then entered the cottage.

The babies slept quietly; and side by side, as in days gone by, they sat down near the vine-covered casement, and talked long and freely of the past, present, and future.

"It has been a long night, dearest," he said, "but with God's help, the day will now dawn upon you. You have ever been a faithful wife and mother. I have caused you much suffering; but in future it shall be my endeavor to be what I ought to be, both to you and my children."

Lizzie pressed closer to his side, and looked confidently in his face, but he made no reply; and after a short pause, William said, hesitatingly:

"Perhaps Lizzie, you are not aware that we have still some trials to pass through. We are in debt, and unless I can make some arrangements with my creditors, we must part with our pleasant home to satisfy their claims."

"Do we owe so very much?" asked Lizzie, a shade of anxiety passing over her countenance.

"A mere trifle to those who have riches; but a large sum to those who have nothing," was the reply. "About five hundred dollars, I believe."

Lizzie gently disengaged herself from the arm which her husband had thrown around her, and entered the little room where the children were sleeping. In a few minutes she returned, and placing a small work-box in her husband's hand, said smilingly:

"Here is a gift for you, dear William."

"And a rather heavy one, for the size, to say the least," he replied, as he raised the lid. "Why, Lizzie!" was his astonished exclamation. "Where did this money come from?"

"Have you forgotten the three glasses a day you indulged me in for so many years?" replied Lizzie, smiling at the look of amazement, with which her husband surveyed the large collection of five,

ten and twenty-five cent pieces which formed the contents of the work-box.

"Is it possible that you treasured it up in this manner, my little wife?"

"I saved it against time of need, William dear; it is all yours now. There is more than five hundred dollars there. We may keep our own dear home!"

"And I am a free man once more, thanks to my own, dear wife," exclaimed William, as he clasped her to his bosom. "I accept your gift, love, as freely as it is given. Strange that both sorrow and gladness should be caused by the three glasses a day."

Years passed on. The busy sound of the blacksmith's hammer was still heard in the little shop. The gray-haired gentleman still smoked his pipe, as with a complacent air he watched his industrious son at his work, and both, at the old homestead and the cottage, all was sunshine and happiness. The dark cloud had indeed passed away.

Lost and Found.

A FEW years since a gentleman engaged in the lumber business in Maine, having an appreciative eye for a fine diamond, and being convinced that a real gem would, if properly bought be a safe investment, accordingly commissioned a jeweler to purchase for him a stone about a thousand dollars in value which was mounted as a spiral-backed stud.

As months rolled on the owner was offered by connoisseurs constant advances on his purchase, which temptation only made him value his gem the more, and he said to himself, "If it is worth that to them, it is to me, and I will keep it until forced by necessity to sell it."

In April of last year, while working on his boom of logs on one side of the streams of the Kennebec, having on a shirt, the stud-hole worn large by service, he saw his sparkling brilliant fall from his bosom, strike the log, and glide quietly into the current below.

Determination to regain it, overpowered the regret of his mind. He kept his loss where his stud should have been—in his bosom. Sounding the depth of the water he found it to be about seven feet; he then decided to wait till the summer drought should bring the stream to its lowest ebb, and taking accurate measurement of the place, by the bearing of the rocks and trees on the shore allowing eighteen inches for the change of direction by the current, he left his treasure to compete with the dace and shiner in fascinating the river mermaid, and returned to his Massachusetts home.

The September following, six months after the loss, the river being then at its lowest point for the season, the undaunted lumberman started for his diamond. The river full of logs, covering the place, had been sawed and shipped, and now only a few inches of water trickled over the spot where the stud fell. He took with him a large tin colander, the holes of which were of a size to hold the prize, if found. He had determined to work a fortnight before giving up the gem as lost, and to have all the river bottom go through his handy kitchen strainer. He made his first dip of gravel and water, as nearly as he could calculate, eighteen inches down the current from where it struck the surface of the stream, seven feet above. And a lucky dip it was, for at the bottom of the pan lay the lost gem, bright and sparkling as when it came from the jeweler.

Bound to do a Good Day's Work.

Mr. M—, of Oxford, don't object to having a hired man do a full day's work, at least so we should judge from the following story:

A short time ago a man went to his place for work. Mr. M— set him to plowing round a forty-acre field. After he had plowed faithfully all day, until the sun was about half an hour high, he expressed his opinion that it was about time to quit work.

"Oh, no," said Mr. M—, "you can plow around six or eight times more just as well as not."

So the hired man plowed around six or eight times, then went to the house, took care of his team, milked nine cows, ate his supper, and found ten o'clock staring him in the face from the old time-piece.

Said the hired man to Mrs. M—, "Where is Mr. M—?"

The good woman answered, "He has retired; do you wish to see him?"

He replied that he did. After being conducted to the bedroom, he said, "Mr. M—, where is the axe?"

"Why," said Mr. M—, "what do you want to do with the axe?"

"Well," said the hired man, "I was just thinking you might want me to split wood until breakfast is ready."

S. R. Bailey & Co., of Bath, Me., carriage and sleigh makers, have a patent machine for sawing around a log, and are thus enabled to furnish boards of any width desired. They recently sawed out a board fifty-eight feet wide, which was never done before. They are principally used for sleigh dashers and carriage panels.

A woman at Oberlin, Ohio, collected money for the soldiers' orphans, and used it to buy a bonnet. She said orphans, after they got used to it, could get along without bread, but women must have bonnets.

The Smuggler's Dog.

WHO would have imagined that a dog had been made serviceable as a clerk, and thus rolled up for his master upward of a hundred thousand crowns? And yet a "big thing" like this happened some years ago.

One of those industrious beings who know how to make a chaldron of coals out of a billet of wood, determined in extreme poverty, to engage in trade. He preferred that of merchandize which occupied the least space, and was calculated to yield the greatest profit. He borrowed a small some of money from a friend, and repairing to Flanders he there bought a piece of lace, which without any danger, he smuggled into France in the following manner:

He trained an active spaniel to his purpose. He caused him first to be shaved, and procured for him the skin of another dog, of the same hair and the same shape. He then rolled the lace around the body of the dog, and put over him the garment of the other animal so adroitly that it was impossible to discover the trick. The lace being thus arranged in his canine band-box, he would say to his obedient messenger, "Forward my friend!" At these words, the dog would start and pass boldly through the gates of Malines or Valenciennes, in the very face of the vigilant officers placed there to prevent smuggling. Having passed the bounds, he would wait for his master at a little distance in the open country. Then they mutually caressed and feasted, and the merchant deposited his parcels in places of security renewing his ventures as necessity required.

Such was the success of the smuggler, that in five or six years he amassed a handsome fortune, and kept his coach. But envy pursued the prosperous; a mischievous neighbor betrayed the lace merchant, and notwithstanding the efforts of the latter to disguise his dog, he was tracked, watched and detected. The game was up.

How far does the cunning of such an animal extend! Did the spies of the custom house expect him at one gate, he saw them at a distance and instantly went toward the other. Were the gates shut against him, he overcame every obstacle—sometimes he leaped over the wall, at others passed secretly behind a carriage, or running slyly between the legs of travelers, he would thus accomplish his aim. One day, however, while swimming a stream near Malines, he was shot, and died in the water. There was then about him five thousand crowns' worth of lace—the loss of which did not afflict the master, but he was inconsolable for the loss of the faithful "clerk."

A Ring as a Detective.

In August last a young lady, a resident of San Francisco, died. During the following October a lock of the deceased's hair, together with two rings, were placed in a registered letter and despatched toward the East. During the mail robbery on the 22d of that month, the letter in question was opened, and one of the rings appropriated. When Postal Agent Barstow took possession of the debris in the mail car, he found the lock of hair, one ring, and several pieces of the letter. After considerable trouble, he managed to decipher the name of the party, forwarding the letter and that of the party for whom it was intended. The writer of the letter, a lady, furnished him with a minute description of the missing ring, mentioning that its principal feature consisted of a heart crossed by two clasped hands. This clue was furnished to the detectives, and through its aid they captured one of the leading spirits of the robbery. But for the ring, which he had devoted to the adornment of his own clumsy hand, he might have escaped unscathed. He has taken up his abode at the Nevada State Prison, and the ring was returned to its owner one day last month.

Very Little Difference.

A man was once traveling through the State of Illinois, and coming to a ferry and being out of money, the following colloquy took place between him and the ferryman:

Ferryman—"I say, mister, have you got any money?"

Traveler—"No, sir."

Ferryman—"Have you got any at home?"

Traveler—"No, sir."

Ferryman—"Can you borrow any?"

Traveler—"No, sir."

Ferryman—"Do you expect to get any on the other side?"

Traveler—"No, sir."

Ferryman—"Well, you had better stay where you are, for it makes little difference which side you are on."

Lay your fingers on your pulse, and know that at every stroke some immortal passes the river of death; and if we think of it, we may well wonder that it should be so long before our turn comes.

A Missionary agent, collecting funds in a New Hampshire town, was informed by a church member that he could not contribute, as he had no change less than a cent?

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